

**WHATCOM COUNTY
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT**

**FRANK M. ABART
Director**



NATURAL RESOURCES

322 N. Commercial, Suite 110
Bellingham, WA 98225
Telephone: (360) 676-6876
FAX: (360) 738-2468
www.whatcomcounty.us

Ms. Nichole Embertson
Whatcom Conservation District
6975 Hannegan Rd.
Lynden, WA 98264

February 18, 2009

Dear Ms. Embertson;

Whatcom County Public Works- Natural Resources supports your project, *Reducing Runoff Potential from Manure Applied Agricultural Fields and Dairy Operations Using a Progressive Application Risk Management (ARM) System*. Natural Resources works with a variety of issues within Whatcom County including salmon and shellfish recovery. In the late 1990's, Whatcom County established two shellfish protection districts due to degrading water quality. Each of these districts identified control of agricultural sources as a high priority for shellfish recovery. Additionally, recent trends in water quality have resulted in a greater number of shellfish areas in Whatcom County experiencing or being threatened with closures. While many successes have been seen in addressing agricultural sources, more work remains to be done. The proposed program would provide another tool which will assist in water quality improvements and recovery of shellfish growing areas.

The ARM program will also benefit salmon recovery. The majority of lowland streams in Whatcom County experience high summer stream temperatures that correspond to low dissolved oxygen levels. This can stress or be lethal to aquatic life including salmon and trout. Nutrient loading from animal waste can exacerbate low dissolved oxygen conditions making a bad situation worse. This program is part of an integrated approach that includes riparian restoration, livestock exclusion, and stormwater management on farms brings that brings added value to protect and restore water quality for salmon, shellfish, and other beneficial uses of the water resource.

Whatcom County has successfully partnered with the Whatcom Conservation District on a number of projects related to agricultural best management practices and water quality. We look forward to the opportunity to continue in this effort and be a stakeholder in this project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Erika Stroebel".

Erika Stroebel
Senior Planner- Marine Resources

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John N. Thompson".
John N. Thompson, L.E.G.
Senior Planner - ESA